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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [JO](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: REGENT TELLS STAFFDEL GROVE: NEED UNITED FRONT
AGAINST IRAN

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Jordan's Regent stressed to STAFFDEL Grove the need for urgent movement toward a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in order to enable a united front against Iran to emerge. Discussions with interlocutors during the STAFFDEL's visit also focused on U.S. financial support for Jordan, Iraqis in Jordan, and Jordan's border security requirements, particularly in the event of any U.S. policy change in Iraq. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The STAFFDEL, consisting of Mr. Paul Grove, Minority Clerk, Senate State and Foreign Operations Appropriation Committee, Ms. Kate Eltrich, committee Majority Staff Member, Ms. Michele Gordon, committee Minority Staff Member, and Ms. Cindy Chang, from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, held discussions July 20 and 21 with Jordan's Regent, the Minister of Education, and several agencies working on Iraqi and Palestinian refugee issues.

Iraq Surge Helps, But Political Solution Needed

¶3. (C) Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein, King Abdullah's brother and Special Advisor to Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces who was Regent during the STAFFDEL's visit (King Abdullah was traveling), expressed his view that the military surge in Iraq will help stabilize the situation but that, ultimately, the solution could only come through a political solution between the Iraqi factions. He was not optimistic that PM Nouri Al-Maliki could change Iraq's internal political relationships for the better, arguing that the Maliki government should be more inclusive and, in reference to Iraq's Sunnis, was not doing enough to show equal concern for all groups. The Regent stressed that more work was needed on the political side and less on military/security training.

¶4. (C) Prince Faisal told the STAFFDEL that Iraq represented part of an historical challenge in which Persians are pitted against Arabs. He saw the conflict as one uniting the Shia and Iran-supported players in the region: Iraq, Hamas in Gaza, and Lebanon's Hizbollah, with support from Qatar (which he accused of sending weapons to Hamas) and Syria (a supporter of Hamas' Khaled Mish'al). Faisal argued that the best way to confront this alignment was to address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, thus taking away one of Iran's major cards and forcing a change in regional dynamics.

¶5. (C) Faisal said, "you fear Iran, we fear Iran," and asserted that Iran was the biggest regional threat, including to Israel. The "festering issue" of the Palestinian-Israel conflict, Faisal said, prevented a unified position toward Iran from the Arabs, Americans and Israelis. Removing this problem would improve the regional dynamic by strengthening the Siniora government in Lebanon and forcing Syria to choose sides: peace with Israel and acceptance back into the Arab fold - or a continued alliance with Iran and consequent isolation in the region.

Arabs Want Peace; What Do the Israelis Want?

¶16. (C) Prince Faisal touted the Arab Peace Initiative, saying that it has support not only from Arabs, but also from other Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey. He suggested that the initiative was a greater Islamic initiative that would offer Israel peace and normal relations with the entire Arab and Islamic worlds. Faisal said that the Arabs had made the strategic decision that they want a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. According to Prince Faisal, it was now up to the Israelis to decide, once and for all, if they want "peace in the Middle East or (only) a piece of the Middle East."

Iraqis in Jordan

¶17. (C) The STAFFDEL raised with Prince Faisal the issues of Iraqis in Jordan and border security. The Prince expressed his concerns regarding (what he termed) the 800,000 Iraqis in Jordan, but underlined that the issue was first and foremost a humanitarian one. He noted that while 99 per cent of Iraqis in Jordan were seeking a safe haven, the remaining one per cent could include Iran-backed infiltrators and other destabilizing elements.

¶18. (C) The Prince thanked the STAFFDEL for America's financial support to Jordan. Grove expressed his interest in increasing that support, and urged the Jordanian leadership to tell its friends in the Administration and in the Congress to support additional assistance for Jordan, particularly when considering what might happen in the next six to 12 months in Iraq and potential changes in U.S. policy there.

The STAFFDEL focused on how possible American policy changes might impact Jordan in the number of Iraqis in Jordan and in Jordan's critical border security needs -- both of which could be addressed by further increases in ESF and FMF to Jordan.

Iraqi Children Will Go to School

¶19. (C) The STAFFDEL also met with several agencies working with refugees in Jordan, including UNRWA, UNHCR and IOM. With UNRWA the STAFFDEL discussed Palestinian refugees and their future in the event of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Meetings with UNHCR and IOM focused on Iraqis in Jordan, and the need to plan for future Iraq scenarios. In a frank and open discussion, the STAFFDEL heard directly from Jordan's Minister of Education Khalid Touqan that Iraqi children will be able to enroll in schools in August if they and their parents fill out Ministry registration forms, even if they do not have valid residency permits. NOTE: Touqan's statement reaffirmed what the GOJ had previously told Emboffs privately, and which was subsequently announced to the public. END NOTE. Regarding U.S. financial assistance to Jordan in the field of education for Iraqi or Jordanian children, the Minister lauded USAID efforts in educational reform and USAID assistance, and encouraged future aid through USAID rather than UNHCR.

¶10. (U) Mr. Grove cleared this message.

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